

# **Point three**



June 1993

Price 3

The magazine of **TOC H**



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## Point three

### The Magazine of Toc H

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Revd P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world, as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, at the address below.

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

*Point three* is available from Toc H Headquarters. Price: 30p per copy or £3.60 per annum. Any contribution towards the high cost of postage will be gratefully accepted.

Toc H, 1 Forest Close, Wendover,  
Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT  
Tel: 0296 623911.  
Fax: 0296 696137.

Editor: Ruth Boyd  
Editorial Assistant: Thomas Hill Long

Cover: H. M. P. Grendon Underwood

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*Point three* is printed  
on recycled paper

A registered charity No. 211042

## Prayer

It's hard to get hold of an image of prayer. To visualise worshipping groups in the act of praying is relatively simple. Many of the early great masters painted saints and sinners alike in their supplications, and there are numerous images of Jesus himself at prayer, alone or surrounded by his followers and by children. Those of us who belong to churches will have no difficulty in seeing our own congregations gathered together in corporate worship.

The difficulty is in building up a picture of what is going on behind the closed eyes and the folded hands.

We know, most of us, that prayer is both a requirement of our faith and one of its greatest joys. Jesus prayed regularly and left behind the greatest of all prayers when he taught his followers to address God, the feared and fearful Jahweh, as 'Our Father'. This meant for the disciples, the acceptance of a new dimension to the God of Israel, Isaac and Jacob, a total accessibility as a loving and forgiving parent.

*In teaching us to pray directly, Jesus showed the possibility of a one-to-one relationship with God, abhorring as he did so the public and breast-beating prayer of those whom he called 'hypocrites', who prayed standing in synagogues and on street corners (Matthew 6:5). His own example to his disciples was to go apart and pray silently and in private and offer his own fears and hurts and suffering into his Father's hands, not demanding that his life be changed but that God's will above all be done* (Matthew 26:36).

Prayer is a way of being connected to God, often without any need for words at all. Jesus himself reminds us that words are obsolete, since God knows all our wants before we do. We should see prayer not so much as an opportunity for us to state our case, as a chance simply to sit in the presence of God and offer Him what He needs from us, our adoration and our worship.

The notion of connectedness is very real for me when I pray. At its very best the experience can be likened to being quietly in the same room as somebody very much loved, each just silently enjoying the presence of the other with no need to say anything. How often have we all enjoyed those very special moments?

One of the 'problems' for most of us, I believe, is that sometimes very intense periods of prayer can appear to go unheeded. When we believe that we are praying for the most unselfish of reasons, frequently for or about other people, there appears to be very little response. As human beings we need to know, that somewhere our voice is being heard and yet as children of God we need to learn the wisdom of letting go and trusting that although we do not always see that our prayers are answered directly, they always are answered somewhere, even if the time frame is not ours.

I believe very firmly that prayer must return to the heart of Toc H. At this time in our history we need that sense of 'connectedness' with the Spirit and with each other. At Headquarters each working morning at 10.25 we join for a quiet period of reflection which is called 'Prayers', although sometimes the emphasis is not on direct prayer. Nevertheless, it is a time of restatement of something about the nature of Toc H and its foundations in the Christian faith. There is also a small group of us who have formed a prayer 'cell' which meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the chapel at Cuddesdon for the express purpose of praying our Movement forward in this time of crisis. We are not particularly 'holy'; but we do believe in the power of prayer to change lives and people and futures. It would be good to think that out there wherever you are reading this, there might be some way that you could 'down tools' for a few minutes each day at 10.25 and add your prayers. There's no doubt in my mind that in whatever way God deems fit, they will be answered.

Jacqueline Bartlett

# An Interview with Mike Lyddiard - Director Designate

The editor spoke to Mike Lyddiard recently, following the confirmation of his appointment as Director at a special meeting of the Central Council of Toc H in Birmingham on 24 April. Mike will take up his appointment as Director in November. Meanwhile he has been reading a great deal about the history of Toc H and meeting staff and members of the Movement.

Mike has been married to his wife, Ruth, for 29 years. They have two children, Rachel, who is 26 and James, 23. He was a member of Round Table in Lancashire for 10 years and is now in the 'Forty-One Club' in Dunstable. He plays the guitar and writes contemporary folk songs, many of which illustrate Lancashire humour. Some of his songs are in the repertoire of professional folk singers. Mike has had two LPs of his songs recorded and has the great distinction of having a hit song, 'First Day at School', recorded by the TV character, Basil Brush. His other hobbies include photography and fly fishing. Mike is a regular church-goer and he and his wife enjoy gardening.

'My father was in the RAF during the war, which was how I came to be born in Canada - he was training Canadian pilots to fly British planes. I went to boarding school in England, spent six months doing a short service commission at Mons and then went to Sandhurst at 18. Sandhurst was a fascinating experience. I was there for two years. I enjoyed living and working with the same people - a community within a larger community.

I had wanted to go into the Navy, but being colour blind to red and



green put a finish to that ambition. The Army seemed a good second best and I partly joined for the fellowship. Any career as an Army Officer came to a halt because I was invalided out, having dislocated my shoulder very badly playing Rugby.

I joined the Church of England Children's Society at the age of 21 in 1963, as assistant Lay Organising Secretary. My job was to recruit volunteers to raise funds and I stayed with them for 26 years. They are now known as The Children's Society. I worked as a basic organiser for about eight years and then took on wider duties in area management. I started off in Guildford and the London diocese, then moved to the Blackburn/Carlisle part of the Bradford diocese. For 12 years, I lived just north of Morecambe where both my children were born. Then we moved to Cheshire and finally to Dunstable eight years ago. I was regional director for the South East and East Anglia when I left.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. It was a wonderful family

organisation and did a great deal of work with needy children and establishing family centres on difficult estates in urban areas.

My departure was an easy decision in a way. I had been a regional director from 1978 to 1989 and there was no further scope for me. I was concerned at the challenge becoming stale and joined UNICEF as deputy director for three and a half years. It was an extremely interesting job but I had become used to working within a Christian context and feel I am back on firm footing now that I have joined Toc H. I worked with a number of European countries on fundraising initiatives and was chair of UNICEF's International

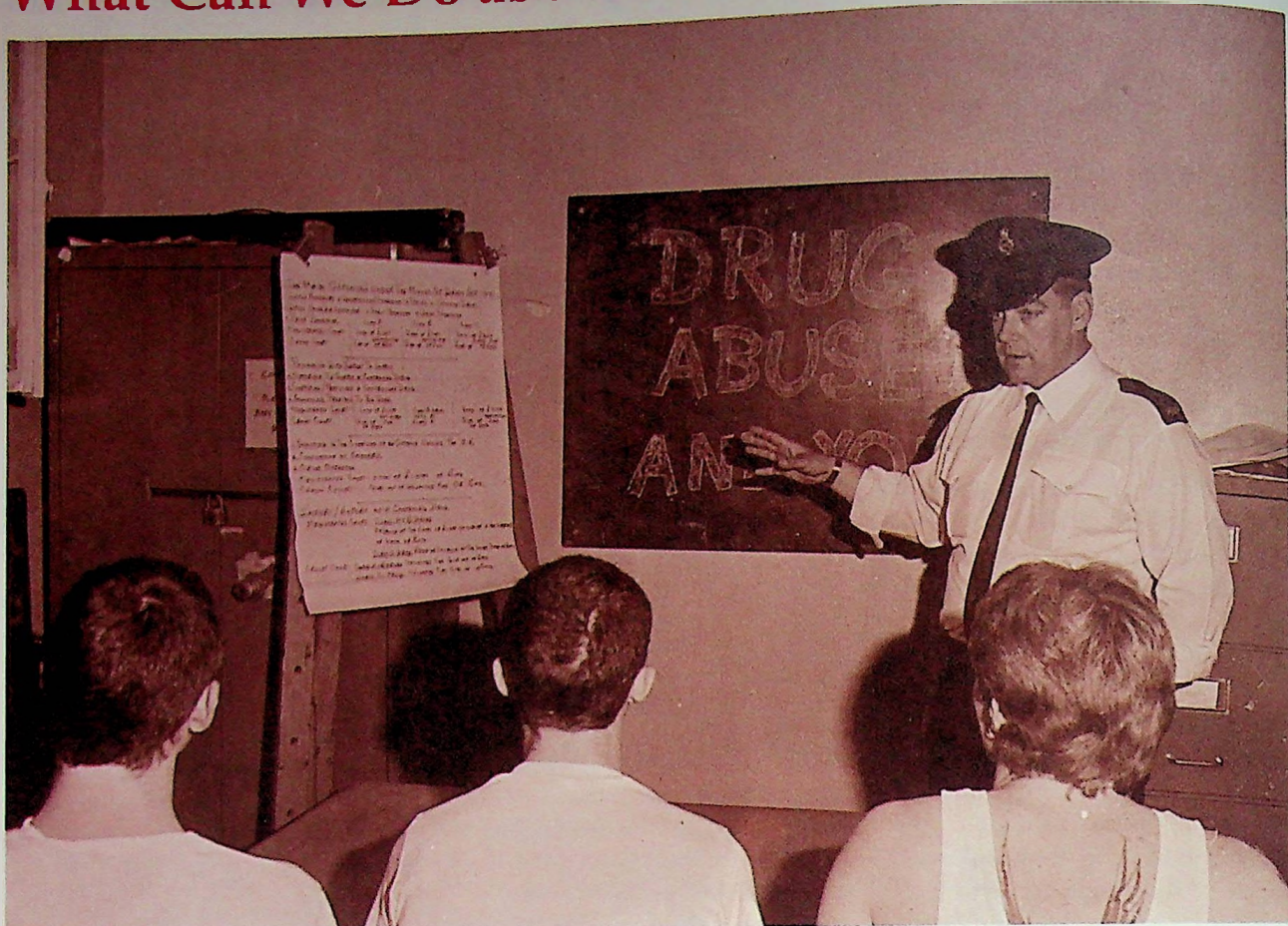
Fundraising Taskforce, which was attended by representatives from 34 nations.

At the end of the day, I would describe myself as a person who likes to get things done. The frustration of UNICEF was that achievement necessitated a great deal of waiting for a whole string of permissions to be given. I like to see results. I had come across Toc H early in my career when the Women's Association gave substantial support to our children's homes. We were promoting a community activity and Toc H impressed me because, rather than just help for a while and then abandon a project, they would sustain their interest indefinitely. At least 30 to 40 of our homes had Toc H representatives on the management committee.

I am looking forward to starting my work with Toc H. At the moment I am doing a lot of listening. I am enjoying meeting Toc H members. It is just like joining a family and that really appeals to me.

# What Can We Do about Crime?

Frank Rice



**I** will start with a confession: I don't know the answer to the question posed in my title. I have thought about it at intervals during most of my life but I remain confused. Are criminals born bent or do they lose shape from a bad upbringing? As a young child, I knew a professional cat burglar - let us call him Bill. He was in and out of prison and, on at least one occasion, when he had used violence, he was flogged with the old cat-o'-nine-tails. I believe he tried to avoid violence after that, but he went on burgling. He had three brothers and a sister. They had all been brought up by the same parents in the same home and, excepting Bill, were all fairly satisfactory citizens. Why? Why did repeated harsh punishment have no healing effect on Bill? I don't know.

The puzzle has stayed with me. As

*Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.* Matthew 35:40

*Our criminal system is an organised attempt to produce white by two blacks.* G B Shaw

an undergraduate, I wanted to become a barrister. Perhaps fortunately, the war intervened. Later in the war, I was invalided from the army and began to teach but spent much of my spare time haunting courts of law. I joined the uniformed RAF Education Branch when it was formed in 1946 and before long found myself involved in courts martial - often as a defending officer. But I still couldn't answer the question I had so long been asking. About 16 years ago, the highly regarded Cambridge criminologist Radzinowicz produced a little book I rushed to buy. He and his colleagues had interviewed a large

number of convicted criminals over a long period - primarily to find what they had in common: clearly that discovery could lead me to an answer to my question. Sadly, though the book was fascinating, it did not help solve the central problem: it seems that the only thing they had in common was that they were all convicted criminals.

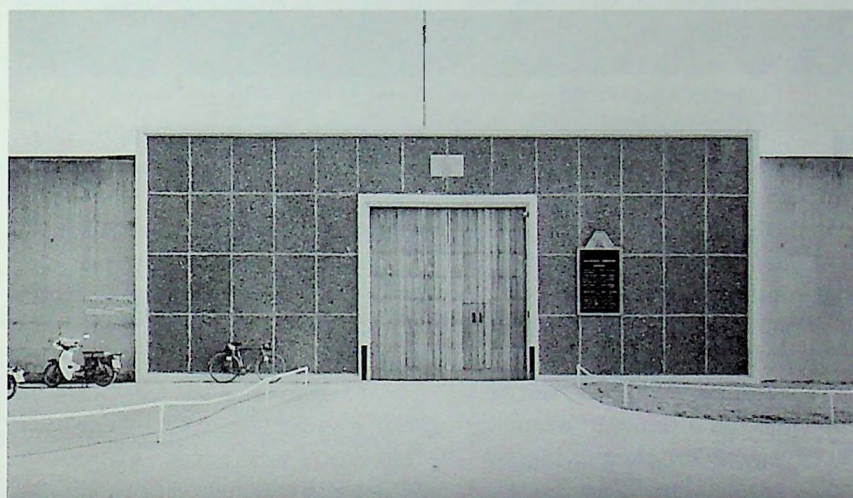
Then, a few years ago, a series of apparently chance events led to my becoming an accredited Prison Visitor. I still remember the advice I was given by my first Governor - a very experienced, wise and liberal man. My visiting, he said, would be of little value unless I could build a relationship with an inmate: that meant that I shouldn't spread myself - maximum, two inmates. I could not start to build a relationship unless I could be 'non-judgmental' - get to know the

man without worrying about what he had done. He warned me to be prepared for the fact that every long-term inmate was an able 'con' artist. I should take care not to become too irritated with prison staff - each one was serving a longer sentence than any inmate!

Since that time, I have worked to build a relationship with six inmates. One has disappeared (a 'one off' offender who clearly wanted to forget the whole bad experience). One has recently died (he was 80 years old and a prisoner for almost half a century). One is now a voluntary Broadmoor patient. The other three have completed their sentences and, to varying degrees, we manage to keep in touch. I worry about them all but I worry most about those who had very long spells in prison. They are the ones most likely to go back, for they find it hard to trust anyone or to find a path through an unfamiliar and unfriendly world. I have now visited a few prisons but my real experience has been limited to Grendon, our only serious group therapy oriented prison. Inmates there are all volunteers from other prisons. (When I checked last, there was a waiting list of 250.) Statistics are hard to come by but anecdotal evidence suggests that the success rate is high for those who stay the course. But many fail to do so. They give up for a variety of reasons. Coming from traditional prisons, they have difficulty in accepting a trusting relationship with prison staff - or with anyone. Some find the strain of group therapy unbearable, particularly the requirement to admit to themselves, and to others, just what they have done and to face up to the harm they have inflicted on their victims.

However well they cope with prison life, these men and women face a daunting set of problems when they are released. Many have no home to go to and such

helpful caring agencies as the probation service and NACRO (National Association for Care and Resettlement of Offenders) are often seen by them as part of the hated 'establishment'. How are they to find a home? Or a job? Or any friends they feel they can trust? 26% of all prisoners (38% of those under the age of 21) have been in care (compared with only 2% of the general population). 43% have no qualifications for employment. 50% have no home to go to. I recall one of my friends, as he approached fearfully his release date, telling me that he would have to depend on his probation officer finding him a room in a lodging house, or a hostel, filled with people like himself. He would recognise some of them. There would probably be organised drug traffic. Little wonder that so many of these are re-convicted so soon.



When I think about these depressing facts, I try to keep reminding myself why prisons are still necessary. Those committing crimes must *be punished* and be seen to be punished. But the essence of their custodial punishment is the loss of liberty and of privacy. It should not involve revenge treatment or degradation. Again, I hear my wise Governor saying, 'If I have care of a man for five years and I treat him like an animal, how would I expect him to behave when he is released?' This has

been the subject of many careful studies and, as far as I can judge, there is no evidence that harsh treatment or longer sentences have any deterrent effect. (Here, I remember my cat burglar, Bill!)

Experienced prison officers have told me that the first six weeks or so of a prison sentence are crushing to the first-time inmate. After that, he learns to make life tolerable by joining a clique and by manipulating the system. Then, having a man shut in for a period, theoretically makes it possible to *rehabilitate* him - to fit him to return to society a good citizen. There are prison regimes making heroic efforts to do this but it is very expensive and difficult and clearly is not yet working. Currently, 50% of the men and 34% of the women released from prison are re-convicted within two years.

Finally, some offenders must be kept locked up for long periods - sometimes for life - in order to *protect the public*. No reasonable person objects to that.

More and more people are going to prison. Recent years have seen a remorseless rise in numbers even though there are many fewer juveniles in custody and alternative sentences have been introduced. I well remember a Home Secretary - Roy Jenkins, I think - forecasting disaster if the prison population were ever to

reach 40,000. In 1992, our prisons held 45,864 and it is expected that they will hold 51,000 by the end of this decade. How can we reduce that total? I don't know, but I note, for example, that large numbers are in prison solely for nonpayment of fines. Further, it appears that nearly one quarter of those in prison are on remand (i.e. either they are awaiting trial or they have not yet been sentenced). Of these remand prisoners, 59% do not receive custodial sentences in the end!



Civilian Instructor (left) supervises inmate learning bricklaying skills at HMP Norwich

It is clear to me that, as a nation, we face the immense problem of greatly reducing our prison population without either 'going soft' on crime or seriously alarming the public. Somehow, we must put fewer men and women into prison and keep them there for shorter periods. It cannot be repeated too often that, whatever our gut reaction, there is just no evidence that longer sentences or harsher treatment act as a deterrent. Moreover, for a system that is clearly not working, ours is hideously expensive. In 1992, our prison service alone cost £1.75 billion (82% of this being staff costs). Last year, the weekly cost for each single prisoner was £316 (in an open prison) and up to £800+ (maximum security). Thus, in 1992, the average cost of keeping one person in prison was £442 a week. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that this average is 18 times the cost of probation care and 21 times the cost of community service.

No one disputes that there is a hard core of violent offenders - and others - who must be kept locked up to protect the rest of us. But, as a nation, we must keep looking for a better answer for most of those starting a life of crime. When we send a young burglar to prison for the first time, he learns to be a bigger and better burglar. Long, repeated and harsh sentences neither deter nor cure: they simply help produce our really hardened criminals. I have now met and listened to some of

those who are, depressingly, in a real sense, products of the system.

What can we do to help? What can Toc H do? I fear that I am no nearer being able to answer these questions with assurance than I was when I started to write this piece. Some of us are (gropingly) doing what we can and I know that one or two Toc H Districts are working heroically in their areas. I know, too, that even doing that little means that we are taking risks and that those risks would be enormously multiplied if we put in the sort of effort we have put into (for example) our Friendship Circles. But perhaps it is time we accepted - as our founder so often accepted - that we cannot tackle real problems without taking real risks. I still cannot clearly answer the question I posed at the beginning. But I can recall occasions when my own small efforts would have been greatly helped had I been able to introduce one of my friends to a

whole circle offering him non-judgmental friendship when he left prison.

Meanwhile, let me invite you to do two things. First, buy or borrow a remarkable book published last year by Gollancz. Its title is *A Product of the System*. The 35-year-old author, Mark Leech, has been in and out of custody since he was first taken into care at the age of eight. He now has a degree in law and writes for *The Guardian*. It was his treatment at Grendon which at last moved him to break out of the cycle of offence, imprisonment and rebellion. It is a gripping book - it even has a shock ending!

Secondly, if you have any glimpses of an answer to the question posed in the title of this article - and throughout - please write to the Editor to let her know your views.



Frank G Rice ■

Frank is well known to members of Toc H as a former editor of *Point three*. He joined Toc H in 1974 and became a Development Officer on the staff in 1975. He was editor from 1977 until his retirement at the beginning of 1980.

## Welcome to 19 New Members

*The following new members were  
registered during April/May*

Mrs Shirley M Scarborough (Bramley J)  
Andrew J Denison (Central Branch)  
Miss Shona Peattie (Denny J)

Mrs Alice C R King,  
Mrs Winifred J Selman (Downend W).  
Mrs E M Alexander (Hemel Hempstead W)

Miss Margaret M Bradshaw,  
Mrs Olive M Pitts (Leicester W)  
John E H Jeavons (Netherton M)

Mrs Ethel J Goodwin,  
Mrs Phyllis Shepperson (Orston J)  
Kathryn S Gadsby,  
Angela Klakow (Paderborn J Group)

Mrs Lucienne Verstraete (Poperinge J)  
Mrs Audrey I Thomas (Richmond J)  
Mrs Dorothy E Rusak (Sheaf (Sheffield) J)

Miss Frances E C Bray (Southsea W)  
William Screech (Tavistock M)  
Mrs Lilia M Jones (Twydall J)

## Deaths

We regret to announce the death  
of the following members:

**In February -** Kathleen Bampton (Orston)  
Evelyn F Durnall (Edgmond)

**In March-** Neville F Coe (Norwich District)  
Walter F Shephard (Barkingside)  
Samuel E Tanner (Tetbury)  
Arthur E Varco (Looe)  
John T Wiggins (Troon)

**In April-** Winifred E Beattie (Parkhurst)  
Harold A G Dixon (Fareham)  
William C Elliott (Harpenden)  
Frank Green (Broadstairs)  
Viney Hill (Sutton Birmingham)  
Albert E Mucklow (Hartley Wintney)  
Eva Palmer (Holland-on-Sea)  
Ivy C Swan (Poperinge)  
Olive I Tucker (Downend)  
Mary A Wirth (Hythe)

### Not previously recorded -

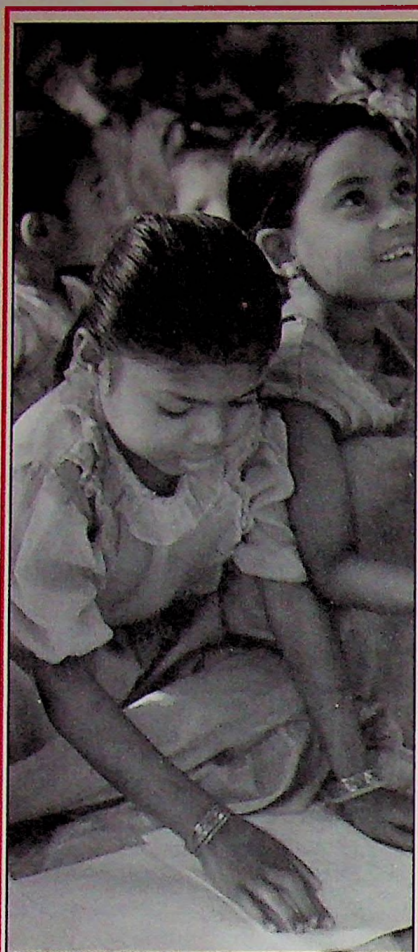
Alan G Caws (Sandown/Shanklin)  
Irene E Clarke (Leicester)  
Matthew O Griffiths (Corwen)  
Fred Harker (Newsome)  
Barry Hemstock (Derby District)  
Margaret A Higgins (Netherall)  
Horace Hutton (Stockport District)  
William E Johnson (N E Norfolk)  
Edward Rhys Jones (Bala)  
Norman W Plumpton (Cam District)  
John F A Powys (Chalfonts)

## Special Tributes

Harpenden Branch sadly report the death of the Revd William C Elliott at the age of 83. Will Elliott came to Toc H at the relatively late age of 67, but he soon became actively involved in the Movement and deeply committed to the 'common purpose' embodied in the Four Points of the Compass. In 1977 he became padre of Harpenden Joint Branch. With the support of his wife Joyce, he not only played a full part in the life of the branch but also became an honorary member of staff helping the Chaplaincy Team, particularly in Beds, Herts and Bucks and the South East Region generally. He was also active in the World Development Movement and a founder of the World Disarmament Campaign. In 1982 Will and Joyce moved to Chester, attending Toc H meetings in Wrexham and eventually transferring to Buckley, where he accepted an invitation to become branch padre. They returned to Harpenden in January of this year as Will's health was failing. He died in his home there on 8 April. TG

Jessie Holland, who died on Primrose Day (19 April), was a founder member of the Edmonton Branch League of Women Helpers, and subsequently Edmonton Ladies Branch. She held many branch offices during her membership and, prior to her illness, served Toc H and the local community for many years and did not count the cost. She has well paid for her room on earth. GAS

Irene Tucker died suddenly on 10 April, aged 83. A founder member of Downend Women's Branch, she served for 12 years as its secretary. She and her widowed twin sister, with whom she lived, were inseparable. They both supported the branch in every way and attended most district meetings until her sister's health deteriorated. She was a devout Christian and had the true spirit of Toc H. It was a privilege to have known her and she will be sadly missed by all. ME

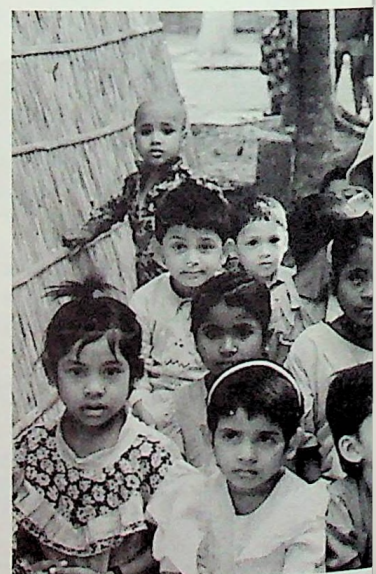
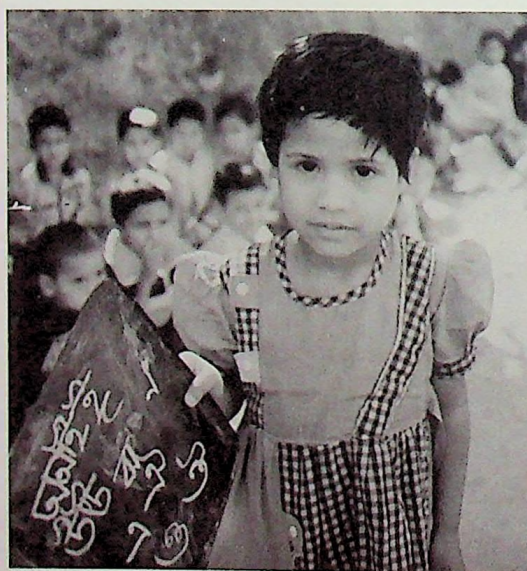
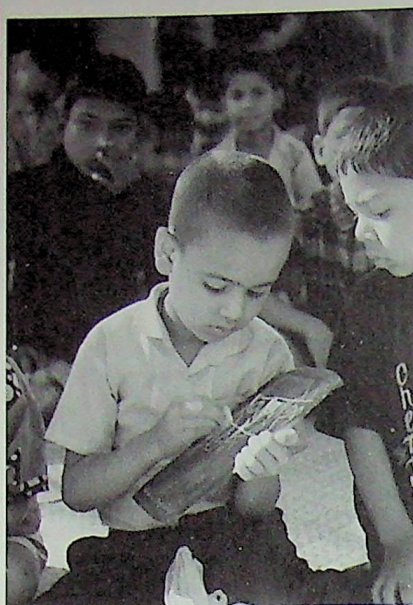


## Branch Support for Khasdobir

Booklets explaining the background and work of the Khasdobir Project have just been printed. If you would like copies for local fundraising purposes, please write to the editor, indicating the number you require.

## Branch Reports in *Point three*

We are anticipating a good response to the 12 June Toc H Khasdobir Friendship Day. Branch reports and photos about the activities you have organised for this occasion will appear in August and September's *Point three*.



# Khasdobir You

By chance, on a recent visit to Sylhet, I stumbled across Khasdobir Youth Action Group, through people I met in my hotel. We met Mr Peter East and Harun Ahmed and were taken around the project. I had gone to Sylhet to visit schools and to find out as much about education as possible, as I am a teacher working in Bristol with Bangladeshi children - largely from Sylhet.

So what could be better than to stumble across Khasdobir? There were a number of factors that I was particularly impressed by:

The number of children now attending schools through the Schools Under The Sky, and the financial assistance the project was able to offer families to send their children on to Primary and Secondary education. The resourcefulness of the young women we met who were involved in sewing work, and the fact that the project seems to have great local support, is wanted by the people in the villages, is self-perpetuating and shows a great deal of motivation for change.

We were made very welcome. I took some photos of children in Khasdobir Primary School. Those

## with Action Group

with their hands up had come from Schools Under The Sky. As you can see it is most of them!

Photos I have brought back with me have helped to raise awareness - particularly of the education issue - among colleagues here. I hope to go back next year for a longer visit in order to gain a better understanding myself and to bring back more information to share with others.

I was so impressed by the project that I have been delighted to offer my own contribution in funding it and would like to be able to continue to support one or two children throughout their education.

Sally Gibson  
Bristol ■



## Toc H - friends of Khasdobir

**W**ith the uncertainty of future funding, it has been decided to hold an annual anniversary day to mark the time when Peter East, MBE, went to Bangladesh to begin this project. It is to be called: **The Toc H Khasdobir Friendship Day** and will be celebrated each year on the second Saturday in June, which this year will be 12 June 1993.

Every Toc H branch, member and supporter of the Friends of Khasdobir is invited to organise a fundraising event to help the ongoing work of the Khasdobir Youth Action Group.

Events can be as big or small as you can cope with! From garden fetes to rummage sales; from bring and buys to car boot sales; from concerts to dances; from raffles to coffee mornings; from afternoon tea parties to a small meal for a group of friends - anything is possible if you are willing.

Poster blanks and publicity booklets about the work of the Khasdobir Youth Action Group will be distributed in good time for your local publicity.

*For more information please contact John Biggerstaff, Toc H International Office, Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.*

# From Bath-House to visitor centre

Visitors to Talbot House have heard the story of the building of the Bath-House in the garden and the consequences of confusing Imperial and Metric measurements. Designed in England in feet and inches, the approved plans were passed to a local builder who read them in centimetres and metres!

Result? The completed building was three times its intended size! A ghastly mistake or an intentional error? An important point made by Jack Trefusis, President Emeritus of the Talbot House Association, one warm sunny afternoon in early April when he addressed an audience of some 70 invited friends and guests attending the opening of the newly completed Slessor Visitor Centre, the former rather grand Bath-House, affectionately known by all as The Slessorium, in memory of the work done by Major Paul Slessor on acquiring Talbot House for the continuing use of Toc H.

Jack, making his address in both Dutch and English, spoke of the transformation of the



Jack Trefusis presenting George Verstraete with a framed photo of the Upper Room

Centre and its importance for future visitors to Talbot House. He went on to express the thanks of everyone associated with Talbot House for the 40 continuous years of devoted service given so freely by George Verstraete, who was now retiring as Treasurer to the Talbot House Association. This tribute ended with the presentation to George of a framed photograph of The Upper Room. His successor, William De Vloo, was present at the ceremony. After which Madame Arlette Duclos, Vice President of the Talbot House Association, then officially opened the Centre.

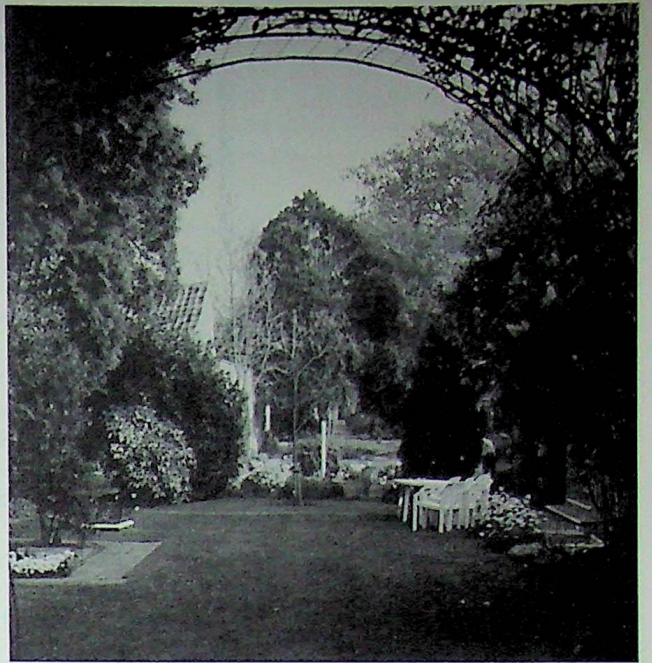
The afternoon continued with Bertin Deneire presenting his newly published work about Talbot House, *A Peace of Flanders*, in which he recounts many stories about the House from its opening in 1915 to the present day. The first version is in Dutch but an English translation will be available soon.

At the Talbot House Association meeting, held earlier in the day, it had been agreed that the Visitor Centre should continue to carry the name of Major Slessor, hence it is to be known as The Slessor Visitor Centre. The main room is equipped with chairs to seat approximately 50 people and has audiovisual equipment, very generously presented by Toc H members in New Zealand, for showing tape/slide programmes. In addition there is a small shop, offering souvenirs, guide books and books about the House, the Salient and the First War; a tea bar; and a store room. Jacques Ryckebosch is very pleased with these new facilities and looks forward to interesting many new visitors.

The Poperinge Town Guides present agreed that these facilities will prove to be a great attraction to visitors from near and far. So a simple misunderstanding of measurement has resulted in Talbot House realising a considerable future asset and no one present, on this happy occasion, could do anything but agree.



John Biggerstaff ■



# Your Letters

The Editor, Point 3,  
Toc H Headquarters,  
1 Pymers Close,  
Windsor, Aylesbury,  
Bucks., HP22 6ST

## Gender and Divinity

Tom Millican's rejoinder (*Point three*, March) to the Revd Cyril Davey's leader, January 1993, brought forth from the back of my mind something that has lingered there for some time, since, in fact, the blatant burgeoning of 'feminism'. Can one possibly ascribe a gender to God? First one must try to define God, surely the ultimate indefinable. What follows might be construed as heresy; on the other hand it might be a whole new philosophical concept - at least I have never heard it propounded, though I cannot imagine that greater brains than mine have not considered it during past centuries. I confess that my ignorance of theology and philosophy lies somewhere between abysmal and total.

To attempt the impossible, one definition I have heard is that God is a Spirit, the Spirit of all-encompassing, unbounded love. Perhaps the North American Indians had the right idea with their 'Great Spirit', no gender stipulated. But the Old World and its offshoots are wrapped in two handicaps, history and language.

Religion, and especially the monotheistic one adopted by the Hebrews and from which Christianity (and for that matter Islam) sprang, had its origins in a period of the world's history when life tended to be nasty, brutal and short. Then the man was the provider for and protector of his family, tasks suited to his physical adaptation. What then more natural than to ascribe to the Greatest Provider of all, whence everything originated and flowed, the same masculine gender? That proposition conceded, one runs into the snag of language, particularly the necessity,

for the sake of style, to use the personal pronoun He, She or It: the second one is disallowed by the attribution of the masculine gender and the third, though probably accurate in this concept, is much too cold and offhand to use in relation to an entity so many feel to be so close and worthy of praise and adoration. By disallowing the personal pronoun, one becomes faced with such constructions as (and this is but an example), 'God so loved the world that God gave God's only begotten Offspring that whomsoever believeth in the Offspring shall not...'.

Of course Jesus had to be male; had the embodiment of God been female she would have received short shrift in the then very much male-orientated world.

If I may be permitted to extend my theory of the Spirit a little further, nowhere, as far as I am aware, does God appear in the Scripture, Old or New Testament, in any corporal form other than that of Jesus, though Abraham and Moses, to name but two, certainly seem to have received communication in some form or another; and the disciples saw Jesus conversing with Moses and Elijah, NOT with God.

I rest my case - but would close with the thought that I can still recite the Paternoster without doubt or embarrassment. Can Tom Millican and the other ultra-feminists say the same?

Stan Doorey  
Nailsea

## A Lifetime with Toc H

Toc H has been an inspiration for me, born of my association with Tubby many years ago. As a student at London University, I was taken along to Mark I by my friend, C W Perry, to meet Tubby Clayton. I joined Toc H in 1922 at Mark I and was thrilled to be given jobs to do in my spare time. I ran an Evening Boy's Club in Red Cross Street, Bermondsey, and helped at an evening club for the handicapped in Limehouse, Stepney, in 1924.

I left London University in 1925 and joined Croydon Branch, then married my wife in All Hallows Church and transferred to the West Wycombe Branch.

In 1934 I organised a Canvas Camp for deprived children at Frinton-on-Sea. What an adventure! 350 young villains let loose on an innocent, dignified, well set area of respectability! Apart from two minor incidents, boys and staff enjoyed a wonderful break from the restrictions of institutional life, and the next few years saw an excellent scheme, devised jointly by West Wycombe and Shirley Branches, by which the children of Shirley Residential School were taken each weekend into the homes of branch members - who became known as Toc H Uncles and Aunties.

Nothing was the same when I came home after the war. From 1952 to 1972 I lived in the village of Medmenham, Marlow, Bucks, and much of my life was spent in community service. Church, local government, and village amenities consumed every minute outside of the family, mostly shared by my wife Jean. I was by then Headmaster of a large London school. I became involved in the Rotary Movement and local council and found Toc H experience a great help in carrying out a very involved existence.

I came into contact with Tubby again shortly before he died, when he visited a neighbour of mine, Basil Liddell-Hart, and I am the proud possessor of a gift from him, a book in which he wrote, 'To Headmaster Gibson after 40 years absent from my side'.

As you will have gathered I am now 90 years plus, and there is not much Toc H work for me to do, but I am a member of the South East Regional Branch. I think I must be one of the oldest survivors of Mark I and look back in gratitude to the chubby little parson who changed my life.

Arthur Gibson  
Worthing

## To Give and Not to Count the Cost

I read with great interest Sylvia Norton's editorial in May's *Point three*. I hope by the time this is published she is well on the way to a full recovery. However, I cannot agree with the suggestion that people only help others in order to get personal credit for themselves. I've always found that the people who are the true givers and carers in this life are the ones that never boast of what they have done. This has certainly been true of my experience of Toc H and it has never been the philosophy of Toc H to expect gratitude or recognition for service.

May I remind readers of the Prayer of St Ignatius - which was the prayer adopted by the Women's Association. Quite appropriate, since I have always felt that women are much better than men at giving and rarely expect, or are given, appreciation for what they do. The words of this beautiful prayer sum up the attitude of hundreds of women in this Movement, many of whom now exist only in our memories:

*Teach us good Lord, to serve thee  
as thou deservest;  
To give and not to count the cost;  
To fight and not to heed the  
wounds;  
To toil and not to seek for rest;  
To labour and not to ask for any  
reward save that of knowing  
that we do thy will.  
Through Jesus Christ Our Lord*

Amen to that.

Sarah Fountain  
Fulham

## Mingled Wine

Rudolf Loewy's letter in *Point three*, March, has made me decide to publish my collection of sayings and prayers which I have gathered over the past 30 years or so. I have called this collection *Mingled Wine*, and it will be advertised in *Point three* when it is in print.

Vera Harley MBE  
London

## An Effective Badge

I have been asked by my branch to send a letter in support of William Elliott, Wyre Forest, who wrote to *Point three* in April concerning badges. We agree with his comments and, if it is practicable, we think that the design should be made clearer and the badge rather bigger.

Nell Tracey  
Llandrindod Wells Branch

## The Cannock Chase Project

During last year's Central Council I attended the talk given by Chris Williams about the Cannock Chase project. I was therefore delighted to read the article in the May issue of *Point three* on the latest developments.

Although the project has no doubt received a lot of local publicity in the West Midlands area, it is a pity that something like this cannot reach a wider audience than through the confines of our own publication. Despite all the gloom which newscaster Martyn Lewis talks about, this operation definitely falls into the opposite category.

John Morgan  
Ruislip

**Editors Note:** The Cannock Chase project has received TV coverage.

## The Need to Explore the Kingdom of God

I was interested to read Revd David Worth's article in the May issue of *Point three*. The Main Resolution

encourages us as members of Toc H to think fairly. In my experience most members I have known are apt to put stress on the word fairly, and leave the thought process to others.

David's article took a lot of courage. It questions the generally accepted basis of Toc H which has been reaffirmed many times. I think it is beholden to us as members to respond. I am interested in the opportunity he offers to discover common ground between us, not necessarily as priests in the Christian church, but as members of Toc H. The guts of the Main Resolution is the Pledge to strive to listen now and always to the voice of God and to know His will Revealed in Christ and to do it. The Points of the Compass follow as ways in which we might set about that task.

An illustration of the Christian requirement enshrined in the Main Resolution need not go as far as a belief that Jesus was God incarnate or the Son of God. I remember a dear friend who had no such belief and yet he lent me a book in which he had compiled many of the sayings and teachings of Jesus, which was his yardstick for life. To me he was trying to live according to the will of God as it was revealed in Jesus. As such, that would be the one necessary 'Christian commitment' Toc H would require if he had wanted to join our family as a member.

I would be very interested to know what David would put in place of the Christian commitment. Would he leave us in a vacuum or can he suggest a better way? It reminds me of the famous cartoon by Bruce Bairnsfather in the Great War. Old Bill is sitting in a shell hole with his bristling moustache and clay pipe watching the shells whizzing overhead. He turns to a raw recruit and says, 'Well lad, if yer know a better 'ole, go to it'.  
*What do you think of that advice David?!*

Revd Jack Harrison  
Robertsbridge

## BRANCH NEWS

**Stockport Branch** recently held a party for residents of a local home, followed a week later by a coach outing to Derbyshire, which included afternoon tea at Bakewell Methodist Church where they were welcomed by the minister, the Revd Albert Harbey. On 2 April the branch held their 70th Annual General Meeting. Thinking of the first AGM, one wondered how many present then had a vision that 70 years on Stockport Branch would still be going.

Two members of **Chirk Branch** recently celebrated their 90th birthdays: Mrs Lily Phillips, who because of ill health is unable to attend meetings, and Mrs Dora Hayward, who still attends regularly. Lily and Dora have been members since Toc H opened for ladies in Chirk. Arriving by taxi for their birthday celebrations, they received presents from members. Another member, Miss Strunkis ('Chunky'), recently celebrated her 70th birthday. We are a quiet branch and most of our members over 70 years of age, but we do our own private Toc H work, through chapel mostly.



On 3 April **Netherton Women's Branch** celebrated their 50th anniversary. Approximately 150 members and guests, including the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor W Webb, were present at the service of Thanksgiving and Rededication in Trinity Methodist Church, Netherton. The service was conducted by Rose Radford, with an address by Ida Bicknell, who was instrumental in starting the branch. Light was taken by Elsie Edwards, a founder member. May Sroyde, Brenda Poole and Cissie Bowen also took part, as did the Church organist and choir. Refreshments were served in the Church Hall afterwards. A collection for the Motor Neurone Disease Association raised £110.

Members from **Leicestershire** met for an Area Day at the Toc H Rooms, Anstey, on 24 April for a coffee morning and a variety of stalls, open to the general public. After Light, taken by Bert Hutton, the day continued with a talk in the afternoon by John Biggerstaff, who told the large audience about the work of Toc H internationally, including the 'Friends of Khasdobir' and the continued good progress of the 'To Love Widely...' Overseas Development Fund. Following afternoon tea the day ended with entertainment provided by 'The Unpredictables', an all-women singing and dancing troupe from Melton Mowbray, some of whom are Toc H members. None would admit to their age but it was agreed that they are all mature. They were very ably accompanied by their male pianist, who stood in at the last moment to save the day. It was good day, enjoyed by all.



*Geoff Cohen from Tasmania has been a regular visitor to the UK since 1976. He has no family connections with this country, merely his Toc H friendships.*

Springfields District branches report that they are involved in a wide variety of activities. **Coney Hall Branch** held a Spring Bazaar in April. The branch is now reduced to four members, but remains active throughout the year. It has run an outing to Broadstairs for Senior Citizens, assisted at another bazaar in aid of cancer research and taken part in Alexandra Rose Day collections and a hospital fete. **Hayes Branch's** annual Citizens' Party was very successful, with over 60 guests in attendance. **New Addington Branch**, which now consists of only elderly non-active members, still helped to raise a substantial amount towards the annual Sponsored Swim in aid of local charities and the Peter East Fund. The **District Branch** has held two meetings this year, with interesting speakers on both occasions.



50 members of Crewe, Shavington, Edgmond, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Welshpool Branches enjoyed a lunch together, hosted by Much Wenlock Branch on 5 May. The branch provided the hot meal themselves, which was greatly appreciated. The get-together was the idea of North West Chairman, Cyril Carrier, and the editor provided the entertainment for the afternoon! The photo shows members of Much Wenlock Branch with Cyril Carrier and Lily, the youngest member of the branch, admiring blankets which members have knitted and crocheted for the needy.



30 members from Kennington, Ashford, Hythe, Folkestone, Deal and Dover Men's and Women's Branches attended the South East Kent AGM at Folkestone on 26 April. Ruth Boyd was guest speaker.

Margate Branch tried a new venture this Spring - a Wine and Wisdom evening. 50 people attended and the event was such a success that another is planned for the Autumn. Many of those who attended were new to Toc H and asked lots of questions about us and took home literature about the Movement. The raffle provided money for branch funds and the District Project - which is to be a camp for deprived children in August. The district also runs a Mini-Handi in the Autumn.

## New Toc H Rep for Women's National Commission

CEC member Jean Whiteman has taken over from Mary Edwards as the Toc H rep on the WNC. She attended their conference at Warwick University at the end of March, entitled 'The Future of the Family in Europe'. Jean reports that it was a very interesting two days and she is delighted at the opportunity of representing Toc H on the Commission. Speakers included a professor of European Politics at Hull University, who outlined the history of the family and spoke with feeling and from a deep knowledge about families and traditions. Author and broadcaster Charles Handy spoke flamboyantly about changing patterns of work. Among his outspoken comments, Jean was amused by, 'Once a woman becomes equal to man she becomes his superior'.

Three European women gave their perspectives on family life in Lithuania, Poland and Norway. An interesting point was raised about how women had to manage all aspects of family life during internment. When their men came home problems occurred when they wanted their women to be subservient again.

The after dinner speaker was Joanna Foster, Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, who spoke powerfully about the lack of opportunities for women in all spheres and strata of life.

Another impressive speaker was Northumbria Police Chief, Inspector Stephanie Yearnshire, who spoke at length on domestic violence, giving horrific examples of incidents which affect families in many different ways.

Delegates were asked to work in groups to discuss such subjects as education, health and traditions. The main problem was in simply defining, 'What is a family in the world we now live in?'

### The main aims of the conference were:

- To increase knowledge and awareness about family developments in Europe;
- To examine changing social values and influences;
- To consider the support structures and to give members and their organisations a foundation for continuing research and policy development in preparation for 'The International Year of the Family' in 1994.

## Membership Officer

We are seeking an enthusiastic Membership Officer to help take forward this well established charity. This officer will provide support, advice and resources to staff and membership at local level. Knowledge and relevant experience of all aspects of membership recruitment and retention are essential.

The post will be based at our Headquarters at Wendover as part of the Membership Department, but will include travel to all parts of the country, as necessary (pool car is available).

**Salary range:** £11,545 to £17,245

**Closing date:** 28 June 1993

*Details and application form from:*

The Personnel Officer

Toc H

1 Forest Close

Wendover

Bucks HP22 6BT

## TOC H NORTH EAST REGION FESTIVAL

**Saturday 3 July 1993**

### Bridlington

Why not come and join us to celebrate all that is good in Toc H. We have a programme of events planned around the theme **'Toc H United'**, including a rededication service, a festive afternoon, a pleasure boat trip and a barn dance.

Guest Speaker -  
**John Biggerstaff**

*For further information, or tickets for the event please contact:*

Richard Newby	OR	Anne Puddicombe
46 Queensgate		9 Healey Wood Crescent
Bridlington		Brighouse
North Humberside		West Yorkshire
YO16 5LN		HD6 3RP

## Prideaux House

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*For further information contact:*

**The Revd Gualter R de Mello, Prideaux House,  
Ecumenical Interfaith Centre, 10 Church Crescent, London  
E9 7DL. Telephone: 081-986 6000**

## DO YOU TAKE TEA OR COFFEE

*Or perhaps a little alcohol or marijuana?*

If you have a strong opinion about the use of drugs, you may like to take part in a Toc H Cameo in July.

*For more information please contact*  
**David Harrison** at the Cardiff Centre on  
Cardiff 0222 462191

## Christian Singles

*Friendship/Marriage introductions,  
fellowship groups, social  
events - nationwide.  
Weekend houseparties.  
1993 Holidays*

Christian Friendship Fellowship, Dept 23B,  
Edenthorpe, Doncaster DN3 2QD

## Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point three Magazine*. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

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